

Appl. No. 09/785,700
Amdt. dated July 20, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 20, 2004
Docket No. 6169-156

IBM Docket No. BOC9-2000-0017

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

establishing a computer communications session between a merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system;

said third-party remote shopping stimulation system reading consumer purchase information from said merchant computer system, said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information;

based on said consumer purchase information, identifying one or more potential consumers-in-need of one or more products;

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, associating said promotional material corresponding to said one or more products with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers-in-need of one or more products and offering said one or more consumers equivalent, but different products.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of reading consumer purchase information is responsive to a merchant request.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein each said step is performed responsive to detecting a business necessity in an inventory management system.

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5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said one or more products include services.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, said product information comprising product expiration information and product identifying information, wherein said step of identifying one or more potential consumers ~~in need~~ of products is based upon the expiration information of products.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.
10. (Currently Amended) A system for providing promotional material to consumers comprising:
 - a shopping stimulation logic unit for identifying one or more potential consumers ~~in need~~ of one or more products, and for identifying a business necessity, wherein said shopping stimulation logic unit is disposed in a third-party computer system that is remote from a merchant and consumer computer system; and,
 - a promotional information database, accessible by said shopping stimulation logic unit, for storing promotional information relating to said one or more products, wherein said promotional information database includes promotional information for a plurality of different merchants.

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IBM Docket No. BOC9-2000-0017

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a consumer purchase information data structure for storing consumer identifying information and product information corresponding to a purchase transaction.
12. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a commerce system for collecting said consumer purchase information in a computer communications network environment.
13. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a point of sale system for collecting said consumer purchase information.
14. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a merchant inventory management system for interfacing with said shopping stimulation logic unit.
15. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:
a delivery system for delivering promotional material associated with said one or more products to said one or more consumers.
16. (Currently Amended) A machine readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:
establishing a computer communications session between a merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system;
said third-party remote shopping stimulation system reading consumer purchase information from said merchant computer system, said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information;

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based on said consumer purchase information, identifying one or more potential consumers ~~in need~~ of one or more products;

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, associating said promotional material corresponding to said one or more products with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

17. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage of claim 16, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers ~~in need~~ of one or more products and offering said one or more consumers equivalent, but different products.

18. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein said step of reading consumer purchase information is responsive to a merchant request.

19. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein each said step is performed responsive to detecting a business necessity in an inventory management system.

20. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants.

21. (Previously Presented) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein said one or more products include services.

22. (Currently Amended) The machine readable storage of claim 16, said product information comprising product expiration information and product identifying information,

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IBM Docket No. BOC9-2000-0017

wherein said step of identifying one or more potential consumers ~~in need~~ of products is based upon the expiration information of products.

23. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.

24. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.